

Superintendent's Board of Education meeting summary, January 21, 2014

Vice Chair Mary Cordray convened the meeting at 5 p.m., and the Board went into executive session. The Board came out of executive session and reconvened at 6:10 p.m.

Out of executive session, the Board voted to allow the superintendent to engage in negotiations with one or more parties in reference to the Bluffton High School construction litigation matter.

The Board approved the meeting agenda.

Pledge of Allegiance, invocation by Rev. Michael Rivers.

The Michael C. Riley Elementary chorus, The Singing Eagles led by Kathryn Ward, performed "Showbiz Snowman."

Points of Celebration (presented by Superintendent Moss)

BLUFFTON HIGH YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT

More than 1,200 students from 30 high schools across the state participated in the recent state conference of the Youth in Government program – including students from Bluffton and Battery Creek high schools. South Carolina's Youth in Government program is one of the five largest programs in the nation, and its mission is to promote active citizenship through hands-on learning. (Bluffton High has been a state leader, and this was Battery Creek's first year at the state conference).

At this year's state conference, students from Bluffton High wrote bills that included abolishing the Budget and Control Board and eliminating sales tax loopholes. Student attorneys participated in three criminal trials and argued a First Amendment case before the Youth Supreme Court.

The following Bluffton High students served in leadership positions, and I would like them to please come forward as I call their names:

- Dan Brown - Palmetto Party Leader
- Mikyla Houghlan - Committee Chair
- Courtney Smith - Committee Chair
- Dakota Story - Candidate for Governor
- Sean Greiner - Candidate for Speaker of the House

Several Bluffton High students were recognized with awards, and I'd like them to please come forward as I call their names:

- Morgan Philoxene - Outstanding Bill - House of Representatives
- Kristian Chekov - Outstanding Bill - House of Representatives

- Jesus Castaneda - Outstanding Statesman - House of Representatives
- Mikyla Houghlan - Distinguished Committee Chair
- Mariah Hayes - Outstanding Witness

Two other notable points of recognition are that:

- Dan Brown and Jesus Castaneda have been selected to attend the Conference on National Affairs in Black Mountain, NC in July
- Bluffton High School, led by Erin Reichert, our current District Teacher of the Year, was recognized overall as a Premier Delegation.

GRANT GRATITUDE

Next we'd like to recognize the Port Royal Sound Foundation, which is doing wonders to protect our local ecosystem and to provide our students with numerous learning opportunities. This grant was given to the Kids in Kayaks program, an initiative that exposes students to natural habitats here in the Lowcountry and that provides a fun, active approach to exploration. Judy Almand is the executive director of the Port Royal Sound Foundation, and we'd like to present her with a certificate of appreciation for this wonderful grant.

TEACHER EMALEE BAKER GIVEN CHAMBER AWARD

Last but not least, I would like to recognize Emalee Baker, a kindergarten teacher at Red Cedar Elementary, for being chosen as the "Sue West Educator of the Year" by the Hilton Head-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce.

Mrs. Baker has taught at Red Cedar since it opened, and before that, she taught at Bluffton Elementary. She was a finalist for District Teacher of the Year last year, and we're very proud of her for being chosen for this prestigious award.

Emalee, thank you for being an exemplary teacher and mentor. You are very deserving, and we would like to present you with a certificate of recognition.

AWARD PRESENTATION

Jim Simeon, executive director of the Sandhills Regional Education Consortium in North Carolina, presented Superintendent Jeff Moss with a plaque recognizing his selection as the consortium's 2014 A. Craig Phillips North Carolina Superintendent of the Year. Moss earned the recognition before he began his new job as superintendent of the Beaufort County School District.

Public Comment

On behalf of the Foundation for Educational Excellence, board member Jan Davis-Vater promoted ticket sales for the upcoming Jewels and Jeans event to fund Innovative Teacher Grants throughout the school district. A Moss Creek resident voiced his concern about possible changes in school attendance lines that would affect his neighborhood.

Chairman's Report

Vice Chair Mary Cordray reported that Chairman Bill Evans was away on school board business and would not be able to attend the board meeting.

Committee Reports

Curriculum and Instruction: Laura Bush reported that the committee's next meeting is on Feb. 4

Finance and Operations: Paul Roth reported that the committee met today. They reviewed the quarterly audit report and discussed payroll patterns. The committee recommended awarding a five-year auditing contract to Elliot Davis LLC of Charleston, SC; the recommendation was approved by the Board.

Human Resources: Jim Beckert said the committee met last week. They focused on reducing absenteeism among teachers and are looking for ideas and incentives to make the reduction. The committee also reviewed classified personnel evaluation tools and corrective action plans.

Superintendent's Evaluation: Mr. Beckert asked Board members to complete the superintendent's evaluation form and return it to Board Secretary Robyn Cushingberry by Friday, Jan. 24. He said that the committee would meet either on Jan. 27 or 28 to review the completed forms, and the evaluation itself would be presented to the public at the Feb. 4 full Board meeting.

Student Services: Evva Anderson announced that the committee met on Jan. 13 to review attendance zones for the whole county. Upcoming meetings to continue that discussion are Jan. 23 and Jan. 30, with both meetings beginning at 4:30 p.m. at Okatie Elementary School.

ACE: Jim Beckert announced that the board chairmanship of the Beaufort-Jasper Academy of Career Excellence had changed from Earl Campbell to Alina Hamilton-Clark from the Jasper County School District Board of Trustees. Thanks to Mr. Campbell for his years of service with ACE. Mr. Rivers is now Vice Chair of ACE.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Jeff Moss introduced retired Marine Col. Robert Semmler to give an update on Starbase, a program that elementary-level students throughout the county attend on the Marine Corps Air Station. Starbase has been in Beaufort County for 14 years and reinforces instruction in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) curricula. Starbase has survived federal funding battles in recent years and may face additional funding challenges in 2015, Semmler said.

Board Business Action

After Dr. Moss reported that the Board's requested corrections had been made to the district's five-year strategic plan, the Board approved the plan. Schools are awaiting the Board's approval so they can develop their individual school plans.

A donation from the Port Royal Sound Foundation designated for Kids on Kayaks was accepted.

Consent Agenda

The Board unanimously approved the consent agenda with the exception of the Jan. 14 Human Resources committee minutes and the Board meeting minutes of Jan 7, 10 and 11.

Ms. Cordray adjourned the meeting at 7:05 pm.